

July 2, 1966

Mr. Julius Fransden, Vice President
United Press International
National Press Bldg.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Fransden,

There is conspicuous error in the UPI story by Jack V. Fox, filed from Dallas June 26 and printed in the Philadelphia Inquirer the next morning. I am confident none of the error is intended; yet I cannot but regret that the copies of Whitewash that I gave UPI were not used in the story, for were Mr. Fox at all familiar with my book he would not have made these errors.

The currently-asked questions are not "most of all" because of Epstein's book. That followed mine, was launched 32 days ahead of release date by the attention given mine (in fact, the release date was not until two days after Mr. Fox's story), and actually contains nothing new. It is but an amplification of the Introduction to Whitewash, for the most part, to which some of the classified but already thoroughly leaked documents were added as an appendix. His use of the clothing was not new, for this and all the evidence before the Commission, which he does not touch upon except in minor and incomplete form, are thoroughly detailed in my book.

Epstein's handling of the magical single-bullet theory of Allen Specter is, at best equivocal. As presented by the Commission in its Report, the doctors are misquoted, as carefully detailed in Whitewash, including direct and correct quotations from the cited and referenced testimony, in chapters 12 and 13. Here other applicable Commission evidence is also included. Most directly related to what Mr. Fox is talking about is the material beginning on page 172. There is much more of similar nature for which I did not have space. It is likewise at best unsupported conjecture that Governor Connally could have had a delayed reaction, for reaction is immediate when bones are struck (page 174) and here, also, the Report said other than the doctors had. In this Doctor Shaw was supported by the autopsy doctors, two of whom were qualified in forensic medicine.

Had Mr. Fox read Whitewash he'd never have written the conclusion of his story, under the subhead "Report Altered", as he did. Whether or not Epstein is right in claiming that at some later date the autopsy was altered - and I do not believe this was the case - there is no doubt that it was altered immediately.

If Mr. Specter is correct in saying he "saw the original handwritten autopsy report" then the doctors were perjurers, for Dr. Humes burned the original autopsy draft, according to his sworn testimony (all of this is in my chapter 13), without Specter asking any question about it when he examined the doctor. Burning such historically and legally important papers was, to Mr. Specter, as natural an event as breathing. The certification of this burning appears in facsimile on page 187 of Whitewash. It is not true, as Mr. Fox quotes Mr. Specter as saying, that "no changes were made."

From the record there today is no way in which we can learn whether changes were made in the first handwritten draft, which was burned. The same question does not exist about the second handwritten draft, which Mr. Specter did indeed see (Whitewash, page 183). And there were changes in it. Mr. Specter himself engaged in some flummery about one of them, asking Doctor Humes why he made one of the changes and accepting an unacceptable response. This was the only question Mr. Specter asked about these changes. There were, as a matter of fact, many changes - six in the last 10 lines of the seventh page alone.

Four of the changes are reproduced in facsimile on page 198 of Whitewash. In the first here presented, Doctor Humes said that Dr. Malcom Perry, in Dallas, "noted" a "puncture wound of the low anterior neck in approximately the midline." In plain English, despite their contrary testimony and the Report's contrary statement, Doctor Perry did tell Doctor Humes the President was shot from the front. Interestingly enough, this is one case where in his handwritten report Doctor Humes did not remove the word "puncture". He even eliminated it in describing the wound he and the Commission said was a wound of entrance, the rear, non-fatal wound (second excerpt on page 198). Someone picked it up for him, though, for in the final typed version of the autopsy (Report, page 539, paragraph 4) the word "smaller" has been substituted for the word "puncture".

This is not all. For example, Mr. Fox quotes without question the Commission's conclusion that the single-bullet theory, which he appears to call "the most logical" in what may be a paraphrasing, "is not necessary to finding that only one gunman was involved." This is hardly possible, for there exists Zapruder's motion picture which shows the Governor except for a few frames when he was blocked from the lens by a road sign. The evidence in this motion picture is such that unless the governor was struck when he was hidden by this sign, there had to be at least a fourth bullet and at least another assassin. But it is enough, I believe, to illustrate that UPI and Mr. Fox may have been imposed upon.

I do hope that UPI will find it possible to report the contents of Whitewash, which was the first book on the Report, having been completed in mid-February and first published in a limited edition a year ago, and which still is, I believe, the only definite one and the only one, including those to be printed, to restrict itself entirely to the Commission's own evidence.

If you have any questions, or if there is any way in which I can help you, please let me know.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Weisberg